ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

The present invention provides a method of diagnosing or detecting cardiomyopathies or myocarditis in a patient following an infection. The method comprises obtaining a sample of a biological fluid from the patient, and determining the level of a brain natriuretic peptide (BNP) or a fragment thereof, atrial natriuretic factor (ANF) or a fragment thereof, or both, within the sample of body fluid. The current invention also relates to the monitoring of treatment of cardiomyopathies or myocarditis as a result of an infection, by determining the levels of BNP or a fragment thereof, ANF or a fragment thereof, or both, at one or more than period prior to and optionally subsequent to, treatment. The step of determining the concentration of BNP or ANF involves an assay comprising at least one antibody exhibiting affinity for the BNP or a fragment thereof, ANF or a fragment thereof, and the biological fluid comprises plasma, urine or cerebrospinal fluid. Furthermore, the antibody used within the method may comprise a polyclonal antibody, a monoclonal antibody, or a combination thereof. The method described herein may also involves obtaining at least two samples of body fluid from the patient over a period of time and comparing the BNP, ANF, or both BNP and ANF levels, with a significant decrease of BNP, ANF or both BNP and ANF being indicative of a positive effect of treatment.